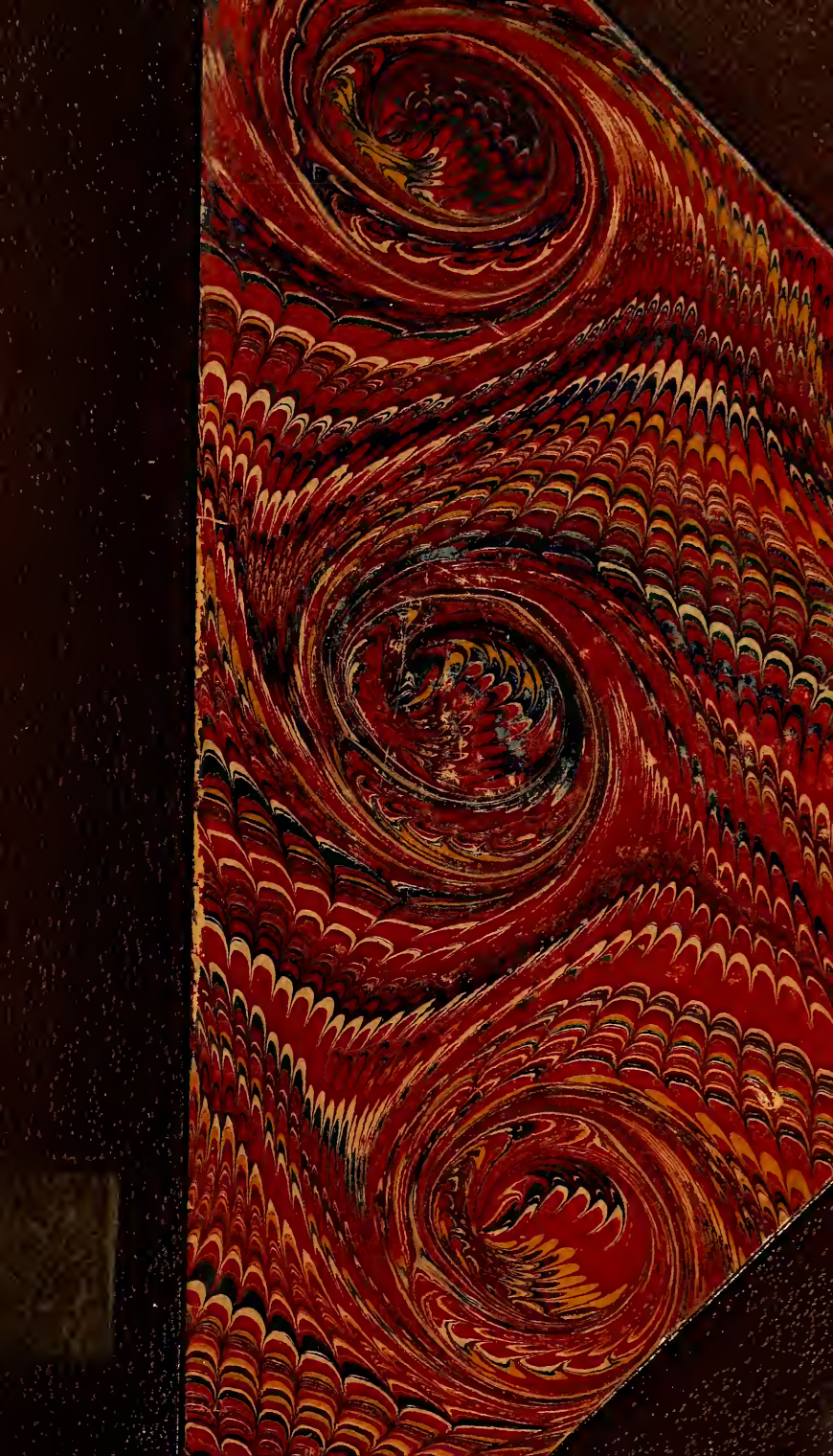




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The Blind.

OCCASIONAL PAPER.

No. 10.

APRIL 20TH, 1900.

All communications for the next number must be sent on or before June 20th, to Mr. Henry J. Wilson, Hon. Editor, 53, Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W.

The Editor does not of necessity identify himself with opinions which may be expressed in the signed articles or in letters of correspondents, and the right is reserved of not printing any letter which may seem not to come within the limits of a discussion likely to be profitable. Letters must be accompanied by the writer's name and address, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

Copies of this Paper, price 3d. each, or 3½d. post free, can be obtained from the Editor.

EDITORIAL.

In this number an account is given of the Royal Blind Pension Society, which now assists no less than 1,036 blind persons by way of pension. This Society and its kindred ones—the National Blind Relief Society, of which we hope to give an account in our next number, and the Society for granting annuities to the poor adult blind—are the three Pension Societies, which depend largely on annual subscriptions, and have their offices in London. As by their regulations, candidates may apply at a much earlier age than to the City Charities, it follows that the applicants are very numerous, and for that reason we think that an account of these Societies may afford useful information to those wishing to secure a small pension—chiefly £6 a year—for a blind person.

HENRY J. WILSON.

NOTES.

1. The Rev. William Henry Hamilton, B.A., was ordained Deacon by the Bishop of London, at St. Paul's Cathedral, on March 11th, and is now Curate of St. Matthew's, Willesden, Middlesex, which is a Mission Church in charge of the Rev.

G. H. Newton. Mr. Hamilton was formerly at the Worcester Blind College, and took his degree at Bishop Hatfield Hall, Durham. We wish him all success and happiness in his new and important sphere of work.

2. Mr. Walter H. Dixon, who took his degree last year at Oxford, with second class Honours in Modern History, has been appointed lecturer in Political Science to Ruskin Hall. We sincerely congratulate him on his appointment, and also Mr. Lane, who is an undergraduate at Worcester College, Oxford, and has been awarded a special prize by his College for work done during the term.

3. Our warmest congratulations must be given to Mr. A. Buckle of the Yorkshire School for the Blind on the success of three of the pupils of his continuation classes. In October last Messrs. Cassell & Co., offered prizes for the three best essays in six subjects by the students of any continuation classes in the country. Messrs. Arthur Littlewood, Frederick Caunt and Alfred Robinson, all of the Yorkshire School, competed, and a letter has been received from Messrs. Cassell's Educational Editor in which he says "You will be interested to hear that I consider the three essays submitted by your students to be undoubtedly the best that were sent in for our competition." The subject chosen was "The benefits of studying History." The prizes were to have been the illustrated volumes "The Queen's Empire," but Messrs. Cassell & Co. have kindly allowed the three blind successful students to choose other books of the same value that would be more useful to them. This success is indeed most noteworthy and gratifying, and reflects great credit not only on the pupils, but also on their special teacher, Mr. Hobbah.

4. It may not be generally known that Mr. George H. Russell, author of "Under the Sjangbok" is blind.

5. As we have to go to press earlier than usual on account of Easter, we are unable to give an account of the

grand concert to be given at the Crystal Palace, on the 4th inst., by the students of the Royal Normal College for the Blind at Norwood, on behalf of the American Hospital Ship *Maine*. Success is, however, assured for this patriotic object, when Her Majesty the Queen has graciously consented to be patroness of the concert, and Madame Albani has promised to sing.

6. We are pleased to notice that in many directions especial attention is being paid to the eyesight of children, because it is all important that their sight when at school should be constantly watched. In February last a report by Dr. Price was read on the testing of the eyes of the children attending the Board Schools at Reading. There were examined 5,076 children, with the result that it was found 1,557 had "fair" sight, 328 "indifferent," 413 "bad," and 2,724 "good." It is no wonder that the chairman of the Board said that "a large and important subject" had been brought before them, when "they had to consider that there were 40 per cent. of their children whose eyes were in some way more or less defective." One of the members of the Board remarked that he had not anticipated such an alarming report, and he did not know what sort of marksmen they were going to make of their boys.

7. A very considerable amount of interest has been created not only in this country, as shewn in the annual reports of the various Institutions, but abroad, by Mr. Stainby's admirable article in our last number, entitled "A typewriting office with blind operators." Orders have already been received for the shorthand Braille machines from the United States of America and from Russia. Mr. Stainsby and Mr. Myers (the blind operator) gave a very interesting demonstration of writing shorthand and of transcribing the notes by means of an ordinary typewriting machine, at the office of the Gardner's Trust for the Blind, on January 4th, when Mr. Seton-Karr (chairman of the Gardner's Trust), Dr. Campbell, Mr. Buckle, Mr. W. Harris, Captain Webber, R.N., and others, had an opportunity of having the system fully explained to them. In regard to the sentence

dictated by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales (referred to in paragraph No. 18 of No. 9), Mr. Stainsby has received the following gratifying letter :—

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

Whitehall,

London, S.W.,

11th January, 1900,

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 5th inst., I am directed by Sir George Kekewich to say that he sent to Sir Francis Knollys for submission to the Prince of Wales, the transcript of the shorthand notes, taken at His Royal Highness's dictation by the blind typist, Maurice Myers, at the Imperial Institute last week. Sir Francis Knollys writes in reply that His Royal Highness was much interested at seeing the transcript, and desired that Mr. Myers should be so informed.

Yours faithfully,

H. WORANGE.

We understand that a great improvement is being made in the shorthand machine by the spaces being "*written*" where the terminal sign in a word or phrase is made. This improvement will effect a saving of time of 30 or 40 per cent.

8. Mrs. R. H. Phelps, Knockwood, Shortlands, Kent, and a friend started just a year ago, a correspondence in Braille with some blind persons. They now have 16 correspondents, many of whom write every week, and all are most grateful for letters. Any sighted people, who are willing to so correspond and cheer the homes of the Blind by friendly letters should communicate with Mrs. Phelps, who will gladly give the names and addresses of blind people who would thoroughly appreciate such acts of kindness.

A Society called the "Girls' Letter Guild" does a similar work amongst sighted girls. There is no doubt that by a system of regular and individual correspondence, the sympathy and interest of ladies, who kindly undertake this work, will help to elevate and cheer many of the Blind in their poverty and loneliness.

9. As the Editor has recently been asked whether he knew of any blind persons, who are thoroughly competent writers in Braille, he will gladly receive the names and addresses of any who have sufficient time at their disposal to undertake to write out books. Payment will be made for the writing, but it is essential that the writers should be careful and exact, and some reference should be given as to their being thoroughly competent to write correctly. If the present need for writers should have been met before these lines appear, the names of applicants will be registered in the event of anyone again applying to the Editor.

10. The Forty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the London Home Teaching Society for the Blind, was held on March 27th, at the offices of the Gardner's Trust for the Blind. Lord Middleton took the chair, and the chief speakers were the Bishop of Stepney, Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr, and Mr. Sydney Gedge, M.P. The report states that there is an increasing number of the blind who are visited, amounting to 1858 last year. The extracts from the teachers' reports are interesting and the following one shows that the work is not confined to home teaching, but every opportunity is taken of benefiting the Blind in other ways, when possible. "A. V., a young man of 19, had been blind from childhood, and had been placed in the workhouse by his friends, who were unable to maintain him. I found him idling his time away, and persuaded him to try to read. He mastered Moon's system in two lessons, and then began Braille, in which he is making such excellent progress that he bids fair to become a proficient reader. Acting on my advice, he obtained admission into the School for the Indigent Blind, and I trust that he will become self-supporting, instead of having to end his days in the workhouse."

11. The Fortieth Annual Meeting of the South Devon and Cornwall Institution for the Blind, was held on February 20th, at the Institution, North Hill, Plymouth. The report for the year 1899, then adopted, shows that at the end of the year there were 66 blind persons (43 males and 23 females) being benefited by the Institution, of whom 45 were resident and 21

non-resident, including 26 journeymen earning full wages. The proceeds from the sale of work made by the Blind, amounted to £1569, being £150 more than was realized in 1898. The sum of £476 was paid to blind workmen. There are at present in the school only 11 boys and 5 girls, whereas it is certified for 20 male and 20 female boarders.

12. The Sixtieth Annual Meeting of the West of England Institution for the Blind was held on February 21st, at the Institution, St. David's Hill, Exeter. The report is for 15 months ended December 31st, 1899, when the number on the books was 53, viz., 19 males, 18 females and 16 journeymen. The trade sales amounted to £959 and blind workers received £407. It is stated that "the success which has attended the training of a class of girl-pupils in basketmaking has been highly gratifying."

13. The sixtieth annual meeting of Henshaw's Asylum for the Blind was held on February 7th, at the Institute for the Blind, Deansgate, Manchester. The report states that there were 179 inmates (102 males and 77 females), on December 31st, 1899, of whom 87 were children, viz.: 49 boys and 38 girls. The Inspector's report on the work in the school is very good. As regards music, sixteen certificates (including nine honours) were awarded to pupils at the recent winter examinations, conducted by the Incorporated Society of Musicians. The Board have approached the Charity Commissioners with the object of seeking powers to extend the benefits of the Charity, and have already "instructed the Out-door Visitor to report on the cases of a very large number of outside blind with the intention of judiciously assisting those who are in need of a little pecuniary help, and have thus expended a sum of £446 during the year." At the out-door workshops, 37 men and 11 women have been employed. We note that the Board was able to capitalize no less a sum than £691 out of the ordinary income of the Asylum. We are pleased to see that a special paper on prevention of blindness is issued, as a leaflet, with each copy of the report.

We wish that all Institutions would either adopt the same method of distributing information on this all important subject, or insert a conspicuous notice in their reports.

14. The Annual Meeting of the Cardiff Institute for the Blind, was held on February 16th, when the Rev. Canon Thompson presided, and the 35th Annual Report was presented. The total sales in the shop for the year amounted to £1898, being an increase of £120 over the previous year. The wages paid to the Blind amounted to £483. There is no endowment, and the chairman remarked that the Institution ought to be much better supported by local subscriptions. The chief trade is in coal baskets for the docks.

15. The 106th Annual General Meeting of the Royal Blind Asylum at Edinburgh, founded in 1793, was held on December 21st, under the Presidency of Sir Andrew McDonald. The report for the year ended September 30th, 1899, states that this was the first year of working under the new Royal Charter. The past year has been one of steady progress. The Subscriptions amounted to £1,531, the Legacies £12,284, and the sales (£15,199) showed an *increase* of £2,025 over the previous year. H.M. Inspector's report on the School was an excellent one. The output of literature from the printing department has increased largely, and there are now four men and five women constantly employed. In the workshop 138 blind persons are employed, of whom 33 are basketmakers, 13 brushmakers, 18 mattressmakers, 13 matmakers, 7 palliassemakers, &c., &c. Their wages amount to £2,696. In the Institution at Craigmillar there are 85 inmates, viz., 16 boys, 24 girls, 33 adult females, 4 pianoforte tuners, &c. There are also 58 out-door pensioners.

16. The annual meeting of the Rochdale Society for visiting and instructing the Blind, was held on March 1st, at the Town Hall, Rochdale. The number of blind persons on the register is 105. We extract the following from the annual report:—"It is intended, if funds permit, to supplement each

pension of £5 which may hereafter be obtained from outside sources, so that every pension may be made up to the annual value of £10." This system of supplementing locally "outside" pensions is worthy of imitation.

17. The Annual Meeting of the Workshop for the Blind, Cornwallis Street, Liverpool, was held on March 8th, and was presided over by the Lord Mayor. The chief interest of the Meeting was centred on Mr. Myers, the blind clerk at the Birmingham Institution, who gave an interesting demonstration of the shorthand system for the blind.

18. We have received a copy of the 7th Annual Report of the Reading Blind Aid Society and it shows how thoroughly the work on behalf of the Blind has been organised there. The Blind in Reading, who during the last seven years have been stimulated and cared for, owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Hugh E. Walford. He originated the idea of forming a Society in 1893 when there was a state of chaos. At the present time 36 blind persons are under the ægis of the Society, of whom 28 adults receive regular allowances, and as the report says "practically there are now no destitute blind in our town, and with the exception of D. M. at the railway approach none begs or has need to do so." The Endowment Fund amounts to £1009 with prospect of a further donation of £500, and the annual contributions amount to £150. There are no office expenses, as all the business of the Society is transacted gratuitously at the residence of Mr. Walford, who is Hon. Secretary and Treasurer. Several ladies act as almoners and regularly visit the blind. The success of this Society is another instance of what one individual with energy, tact and perseverance can do by devoting himself unselfishly on behalf of a good cause. A similar transformation scene has taken place in Whitby, where by the constant and vigilant care of Mr. Hirst all the blind who can work, are provided with employment, and the aged with allowances. Would that there were in other centres more men like Mr. Hirst and Mr. Walford, and the Hon. Secs. of some of the Home

Teaching Societies, who would devote their lives to befriending the Blind and to providing that assistance which in the case of blind workpeople often makes the difference between success and failure. "Mankind's concern is Charity."

19. The Northampton and County Association for the Blind has issued a report for the year ended December 31st, 1899, which was adopted at a meeting held on March 20th. A retail shop was opened in September and has been found most useful in disposing of the goods made at the workshop, which was started only in September, 1898. The sales amounted to £216. A legacy of about £3000 has been left to create a Trust "for the general welfare of the blind" in connection with this Association, the primary object being to pay 5/- a week to the indigent blind of the County of Northampton.

20. Some new dipping baskets, which are made at the Birmingham Institute for the Blind, have been patented. They are intended to take the place of the perforated earthenware baskets hitherto in use for dipping purposes. The baskets are so woven as to be of one piece, and they resist the action of acids. As they are unbreakable and cheaper than earthenware baskets, a great saving is effected in the use of them. They are also lighter in weight, and the liquid runs freely through them. Any size basket can be made, but the usual size is sold for 1/8.

21. The English Education Exhibition which was held at the Imperial Institute and was open from January 5th to 27th inclusive, was visited by 16,933 persons, of whom more than half came during the last week of the Exhibition. The committee have issued a report in which they state that they "regret that the limited extent of the space available at Paris has prevented the Royal Commission from choosing many more of the exhibits for the Paris Exhibition. It is to be understood that want of space is the sole reason why a very much larger selection was not made." The exhibition was not a success financially and a call had to be made on the Guarantee Fund.

The exhibitors in the Blind section were only eight, viz., the Gardner's Trust, the Normal College at Norwood, the Yorkshire School, the Birmingham Institution, the London Society (St. John's Wood), the Liverpool Catholic Asylum, the British and Foreign Blind Association, and the Northern Counties Society. The exhibits were excellent, and would well bear comparison with any of the same nature from other countries. It is therefore much to be regretted that only a small portion of the exhibits could be selected, and that the space allotted in the Paris Exhibition to the English Blind section is not sufficient to give a proper representation of what is being done for the Blind in England from an educational point of view.

22. Mrs. Trietschel, 3, Cairns Street, Princes Avenue, Liverpool, has invented the "Haptochrone" for the purpose of enabling blind children to comprehend the working of an ordinary timepiece. The invention, price 2/-, consists of a board 9 inches square with a clock dial and revolving hands.

23. The Moulton School Board, Northwich, have drawn attention to an anomaly which exists in the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act, 1893, with regard to the payment of the expenses incurred under that Act.

By section 4, the Authorities charged with the execution of the Act, are :—

For an area under a School Board—The School Board.

For an area not under a School Board—The District Council.

In all cases where the area of a School Board District is not coterminous with a Rural or an Urban District there is therefore an overlapping which results in the ratepayers of the School Board District not only maintaining and educating their own children, but contributing also to the maintenance and education of children sent at the instance of the Council of whose district the School Board forms a part.

The Moulton School Board has had the anomaly brought under its notice by experience, it having been compelled to send

a deaf boy to school at Manchester at a cost equal to nearly 1d. in the £ on the rates of the Township. The Township is also at present contributing to the expenditure in respect of two children sent to the same school by the Rural District Council of Northwich.

The Board have protested to the Education Department against the injustice, and urged that some alteration should be made in the law.

It was understood that a short Bill would be laid before Parliament, but nothing has, however, been done. It would be well if all the School Boards sent to the Education Department a protest similar to the one sent by the Northwich Board, and urged that the matter be dealt with by Parliament without delay. Some School Boards may not hitherto have incurred any expense under the Act of 1893, but their concurrence is solicited, because it is quite possible they may be called upon to deal with a blind or deaf child in their district at any time.

24. Under the title "A new series of Studies and propaganda on behalf of the Blind," M. de la Sizeranne, Secretary of the Valentin Haüy Association for the Welfare of the Blind, has just published a new work. It is the sixth of a collection which already comprises "The useful Blind," "The Blind, by a blind man" (a work which gained the medal of the French Academy) and others. This latest work contains several studies of an interesting nature, and discusses questions of general interest, such as the Braille type, the New York system, the Roman type, plans for the commencement of a workshop for the Blind in large towns, etc., etc. These studies are written in a very concise style, without technical phrases, or useless arguments. From this it results that even those persons who cannot read French very fluently, or easily, may venture to read this book without fearing that they will understand only two or three pages in every ten. In this work one may safely say that every word tells.

25. We have to acknowledge with many thanks the regular receipt of the monthly paper "Le Valentin Haüy." In the

February number there is an interesting article, translated from English, called "The Dreams of the Blind." We have asked the Director where the original article appeared, but he informs us that the name of the Magazine in which it was printed was not communicated to him. Can any of our readers kindly tell us?

26. There is a woman in an almshouse in Newark, U.S.A., who is blind, deaf and dumb, and has no sense of taste or smell. She is thirty-three years of age, knits beautifully, reads and writes Braille and uses a typewriter. She has written out several poetical compositions of her own.

27. A very good library is being rapidly formed at Oxford for the use of blind undergraduates. There are not only selections from Horace, Euripides, Plato, Livy, Xenophon, Cicero, Thucydides, Cæsar, &c., but also Shakespeare's Hamlet, King John, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, the Tempest, Richard the Second, and the Merchant of Venice. There are also Milton's Paradise Lost, Samson Agonistes, Comus and Lycidas, L'Allegro and Il Penseroso, poems by Tennyson, Browning, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Byron, an Anglo-Saxon glossary (2 vols.), Beowulf, &c.

28. Farming has been started in the Adelaide Institution for the partially Blind, and Mr. Stainsby with his inexhaustible energy, is already enquiring whether it cannot be tried in England. The employment would be of a healthy character, and the partially blind would have the advantage of the best possible light on their work.

29. Not quite three years ago a lad, aged 16, who had become both blind and deaf whilst working in a foundry, was enabled by assistance from Gardner's Trust for the Blind to go to the Yorkshire School for the Blind. To-day he is an excellent basketmaker, and is earning his own living at the Workshop for the Blind at Whitby. This rapid and marked success shows what careful and thorough instruction can do when backed up by energy and industry on the part of the pupil, and should stimulate and encourage those still under instruction.

THE ROYAL BLIND PENSION SOCIETY.

Among the many institutions seeking to befriend the blind poor, few have better justified their position than the Royal Blind Pension Society. To give pecuniary aid to the adult blind to enable them to remain with their friends, and to supplement their necessarily scanty earnings was no new thing when the Society was founded. The plan was already in operation, but it was chiefly in the hands of City Companies, and certain endowed Charities like Hetherington's, Day's, and a few others, and their work was limited to the income derived from their endowed funds, and in some cases was hampered by many out-of-date restrictions.

There was a call therefore for Associations with wider powers, and it was due to a few zealous friends in Southwark that this Society, appealing to the wide constituency of the United Kingdom, was instituted. It originated in 1863 as the Protestant Blind Society, and under the fostering care of the Pocock family soon became an important Institution. It is interesting to remember that when speaking of the Society some years ago, the late Archbishop of Canterbury said, "We hope the name of Pocock, which has been honoured for so many generations in Southwark, and for three generations has been your strength, will never cease to be connected with this Society."

The original Treasurer was Mr. Thomas Pocock, the grandfather of the present Honorary Secretaries, Messrs. George and Percy R. Pocock. To these and other members of the family is undoubtedly due the large measure of success which the Society has obtained. In its first year when the Society was little more than a local concern giving small doles to blind people in the neighbourhood, the income was £329 10s. 7d., and the sum paid away to Pensioners £252.

In every year since, these amounts have grown until at the present time the Society enjoys a revenue of upwards of £10,000 and pays pensions to 1,036 blind people living in all parts of the United Kingdom. It has also a reserve fund—chiefly the accumulation of legacies—amounting to nearly £40,000.

To this substantial result several things have contributed. Apart from the zealous labours of the Pocock family the Society has been fortunate in securing the support and influence of many distinguished people. The Queen is the Patron and subscribes to its funds. Its claims for recognition have been advocated by the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, the Duke of Cambridge, the late Archbishop of Canterbury, Earl Cadogan, Viscount Portman, Lord Wantage, Lord Brassey, and others. Not the least important feature is the association of the Duke of Grafton as President since 1886. His Grace's warm interest in all that concerns the blind poor is written large in the history of the Society. His Presidency is no mere figure head. His time, his advice, and his pen are always at the service of the Committee.

But while attributing much of the progress of the Society to personal elements, it may fairly be claimed that its system of relief, and plan of electing pensioners have insured the confidence of the charitable public. The election of pensioners by the votes of subscribers, to which some objections are often urged, has always been supplemented by a liberal application of one of the rules whereby not less than two pensioners must be elected in order of priority every half year. In recent years as many as thirty have been placed on the Pension List under this rule at one time, and the number at each election seldom falls below ten. The subscribers therefore have the satisfaction of selecting their own candidates in preference to leaving it to selection by the Committee, and have the assurance also that none of the other cases can eventually fail of success.

The Society still enjoys the shelter of the Pocock family. As at the first, the business of the Society is still carried on, rent free, at the premises of the Honorary Secretaries, where it has been located for nearly forty years.

In 1894 the Blind Female Annuity Society was amalgamated with this Society, and its candidates, pensioners, and reserve fund (about £2,500) duly transferred.

In 1897 the Bath Blind School Home was closed, and the Trust funds amounting to £7,127 were handed over to the Society, contingent on annuities being paid to certain of the former inmates of the Home.

The object of the Society is to relieve the indigent Blind of good moral character, by granting them Pensions, payable at their own homes, and regulated in amount according to the following scale, viz.:—£6 per annum until 65 years of age; £9 from 65 to 80; £12 from 80 to 85; and £15 after attaining the age of £85.

Candidates must not be less than 21 years of age. If unmarried their income may not exceed £20 per annum; if married, or widowed with children dependent, £30 per annum. The Committee are allowed a discretion as to the limit of income, in exceptional cases.

Candidates must be recommended by one subscriber of £2 2s., or by two of £1 1s. each, or by Life Governors who have contributed not less than £21.

The elections take place in May and November each year. The pensions are paid monthly through Hon. Almoners, of whom there are over 700.

Fuller information can be obtained on application to the Secretary at the Office of the Society, 237, Southwark Bridge Road, London, S.E.

A pamphlet (revised edition), post free 4d., giving information with regard to Institutions, Societies, and Classes for the Blind in England and Wales, published by the Secretary of Gardner's Trust for the Blind, under the sanction of the Committee, can be obtained on application at the office of the Trust, 53, Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W.

